

NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION SOUTHERN TIER CHAPTER FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

COMING NYFOA PROGRAMS

WOODSWALK: MICHAEL'S TREE FARM, OCTOBER 10, 9:30

A ten-acre stand of red pine on Jerry Michael's farm blew down during an ice storm in 2001. Woodswalkers will be able to compare various methods employed in attempting to repopulate this stand with native hardwoods. Eight hundred hardwood seedlings were planted within a three-acre deer exclosure fence. Another eight hundred hardwood seedlings were planted in five-foot tree shelters outside the deer fence. Two hundred more seedlings were planted as a control group with no deer protection. This experiment was partially funded with FLEP cost sharing and some of the results have been very surprising. The woodswalk will also cover timber stand improvement in a mature hardwood stand, including crop tree management, the cut stump/herbicide method of beech control and the encouragement and protection of natural advanced regeneration.

Lastly, for those who are interested and want to hang around a little longer, Jerry will share tidbits from his forty years of experience with growing Christmas Trees.

We will walk about one mile, over varied terrain. Wear sturdy shoes or boots and bring raingear if called for; there is no shelter.

Michael's Tree Farm is located at 3192 State Route 206, Whitney Point, NY. It is on the south side of Route 206, 2.4 miles East of Whitney Point and 2.3 miles West of Triangle. There is a red cottage, with a detached red garage on the property. If conditions are wet, cars will have to park along the highway. Carpooling is encouraged. Those interested in carpooling can assemble in the rear parking lot at Cornell Cooperative Extension, 840 Front Street, Binghamton at 8:45 a.m. and depart for Whitney Point by 9:00. The woodswalk should conclude by 11:30.

WOODLAND OWNERS FIELD DAY, September 19, 8:30 a.m. - 1:00

Co-sponsored by NYFOA and the DEC, this event is presented by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome and Chenango Counties. As it was last year, the Field Day will be held at Gaius Cook Park, located off State Route 206, just east from the village of Greene.

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Topics will include: tree identification, tree valuation measurements, crop tree management, wildlife habitat enhancement, and use of maps, compasses and GPS devices. Cost of this event is \$15 for one person and \$5 for each additional family member if registered by September 16. For more detail on the agenda, or to register, call Cornell Cooperative Extension in Norwich on 607 334-5841.

**2009 NY FOREST OWNERS FALL WORKSHOP,
WOODSWALK & BANQUET
LAKE PLACID & PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE, OCTOBER 3 - 5.**

Topics of great interest to forest owners, top-notch speakers, interesting tours, social events and optional activities. Hosted by the Northern Adirondack Chapter of NYFOA, at the peak of fall color, this is a weekend not to be missed! Go to the NYFOA website at www.nyfoa.org/ for details on the agenda and registration forms. Registration deadline is September 18.

NRCS BEGINS STATEWIDE SIGN-UP FOR THE NEW CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) began continuous sign-ups for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) on August 10. The program includes cost sharing for timber stand improvement, such as pre-commercial thinning and other practices. The first cutoff date for project ranking purposes is September 30. For more information, go to www.nrcs.usda.gov/new-csp/ Also, see www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov

MANY THANKS to Ray Nolan for hosting our July 18 Woodswalk. Turnout was small, but the exchange of knowledge was great! Ray made good use of his long career with the DEC, and a satchel full of reference materials, to answer every question we had - and a few we weren't smart enough to ask. I think we will avoid scheduling future woodswalks during the summer.

EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB) UPDATE.

See the following website for comprehensive information on the EAB, including maps, photos, links, etc. <http://nyis.info/insects/EmeraldAshBorer.aspx>. You can also call your local Cornell Cooperative Extension for management guidance.

THE "ODE TO ASH" ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE IS AN EDITORIAL FROM THE JULY ISSUE OF THE NORTHERN LOGGER MAGAZINE, WRITTEN BY EDITOR ERIC A. JOHNSON. We have an ongoing agreement with the Northern Logger to reprint material from their fine magazine.

An Ode to Ash

News that the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has been discovered in western New York comes as no big surprise, but it still saddens me greatly. That's because ash has always been my favorite species. I think the wood is beautiful and there is no tree prettier than a healthy ash. And being an enthusiastic firewood cutter who likes to split by hand, a load of ash always makes me feel like Superman. It may not have the highest Btu value, but it's a pleasure to cut, handle and burn.

Of course, we've suspected this would happen eventually ever since the pest suddenly materialized in Michigan a few years ago, and since then, every time I see a stand of ash, I try to picture what the woodlot is going to look like when it's gone. I know that those with a big stake in future of ash—handle makers, baseball bat manufacturers and probably even basket weavers—have made contingency plans for the day when there may be no more raw material. It's going to be a feast-to-famine situation for them in the coming years if no way can be found to stop this bug.

Like other states, New York has been trying to keep the EAB outside its borders, and now several counties in the western part of the state near where the pest has been discovered have been quarantined. Elsewhere in the Empire State state it's illegal to transport firewood more than 50 miles from where it has been cut, which nobody really thinks is very effective, since you could just as easily spread the pest on sawlogs and pulpwood, neither of which are subject to the 50-mile limit. And while it does have a negative impact on some commercial firewood producers, the biggest offenders (and biggest risk, by far) comes from tourists who probably don't even know about the restrictions in the first place. So now, in addition to bringing their own groceries, beer and soda and leaving the garbage behind, they're also potentially bringing death and deforestation to forests in places like the Adirondack Park when they bring their own firewood from infested areas.

This is not an unprecedented event, as anyone with a passing knowledge of forest history in the United States is well aware. It was before my time, but American Chestnut at one time dominated the hardwood forests east of the Mississippi, before the blight killed them all off. You can still find chestnut shoots sprouting out of old stumps,

but they never get big enough to have any commercial value.

Happily, any antique store has furniture made from chestnut lumber, and it was also a common species used in construction, so we can still get some enjoyment and benefit from it. Like ash, chestnut is a beautiful wood. Unlike ash, it provided a major food source for wildlife.

But for all practical purposes, chestnut is gone, although attempts to bring it back in a form immune to the deadly blight look promising. I hope and suspect that science will be able to do the same for ash at some point in the future, if they can't stop the spread of the EAB before it's too late.

The interesting thing, to me at least, is that if you didn't know the history of the chestnut in America, you wouldn't know about the tragedy of its loss by looking at the forest today. What rose up to replace it? I think oak was the main species, which has been good for wildlife who now depend on acorns for a food source. And yes, ash populations probably benefited from the demise of a competitor as well.

What's going to rise up to fill in the gaps left by the disappearing ash? A friend of mine who is a procurement forester for a major lumber company was recently interviewed on the radio about the EAB and New York's threatened ash resource. His advice to landowners was to enlist the help of a forester in deciding how best to make the transition. He said that in the coming years, landowners could manage their stands containing ash to favor the emergence of other desirable species, such as maple, oak and black cherry, instead of letting nature take its course, and perhaps wind up with beech and striped maple.

I think that's excellent advice, and I hope the word gets out to the people who will benefit the most from it. If the public will allow us to play a role in minimizing the damage to their valuable ash-containing woodlots, then perhaps more of our fellow citizens will begin to understand and appreciate the value of intelligent forest management. Come to think of it, that's not a bad sales pitch for foresters and loggers to make when approaching landowners in the future.

Maybe some good can come of this after all.

—E.A.J.

The New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) was founded in 1963 to promote sustainable woodland practices and improved stewardship of privately owned forestlands. NYFOA's educational mission is pursued through its bi-monthly publication "The New York Forest Owner", workshops and woods walks sponsored by its ten regional Chapters, and through partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), the DEC and numerous kindred organizations with similar objectives.

The NYFOA Southern Tier Chapter (SOT) includes Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware and Otsego Counties. SOT sponsors several workshops and woodswalks each year, usually in cooperation with county CCE associations. SOT publishes a Fall, Winter and Spring Newsletter to announce programs and other educational information for members.

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FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER
PROGRAM NOTICES
WOODS WALK